

Newburgh, NY -- Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) this week urged U.S. Postmaster General Patrick R. Donahoe to maintain and continue full mail sorting operations at the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) facility in Newburgh, New York. The lawmakers sent a letter yesterday to Donahoe in response to a current study that the U.S. Postal Service is conducting to potentially consolidate mail sorting operations at the Mid Hudson General Mail Facility (GMF) in Newburgh with the USPS processing and distribution center in White Plains. Hinchey and Gillibrand oppose consolidation, arguing that it would reduce the quality of mail services for the region's residents and businesses, result in the loss of local jobs in the area, and fail to deliver significant, if any, cost savings for the USPS.

"While we recognize the serious financial challenges facing the U.S. Postal Service, we are deeply concerned that consolidation of mail processing from Newburgh to White Plains could negatively impact the quality of mail services and also adversely affect the local workers who rely on the Mid Hudson GMF for employment," Hinchey and Gillibrand wrote to Donahoe. "We understand that it is necessary for the USPS to reduce costs and seek operational efficiencies in order to remain viable as the volume of mail continues to decline. However, significant concerns have been raised to us that consolidation of mail sorting and processing from Newburgh to White Plains would cause increased delays of mail delivery in our region since mail would travel a greater distance through heavily congested traffic in order to be processed."

Hinchey and Gillibrand also noted to Donahoe that the Newburgh facility, which employs nearly 400 people, is under a long-term lease at a very affordable price and that recent steps have been taken to make the site operate more efficiently at an even lower cost. In furthering their argument, the lawmakers also noted that the location of the Mid Hudson GMF provides easy access to Interstates 84 and 87 and Stewart International Airport as opposed to the possible alternative of White Plains, which is located in a much more congested and expensive region of the state.

The full text of the letter from Hinchey and Gillibrand to Donahoe follows:

August 9, 2011

Mr. Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza,
SW Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Mr. Donahoe:

We are writing in regard to the current Area Mail Processing (AMP) study of mail sorting operations at the Mid Hudson General Mail Facility (GMF) in Newburgh, New York for possible consolidation into the Westchester Processing and Distribution Facility in White Plains, New York. While we recognize the serious financial challenges facing the U.S. Postal Service, we are deeply concerned that consolidation of mail processing from Newburgh to White Plains could negatively impact the quality of mail services and also adversely affect the local workers who rely on the Mid Hudson GMF for employment.

We understand that it is necessary for the USPS to reduce costs and seek operational efficiencies in order to remain viable as the volume of mail continues to decline. However, significant concerns have been raised to us that consolidation of mail sorting and processing from Newburgh to White Plains would cause increased delays of mail delivery in our region since mail would travel a greater distance through heavily congested traffic in order to be processed. The possible delays and increased costs of transportation should be fully considered as the AMP study proceeds.

Concerns have also been raised that consolidation would produce modest or little cost savings while the impacts on local workers and their families and the economy of the Mid Hudson region could be considerable. It is our understanding that the Mid Hudson GMF is under a long-term lease at very low cost and that the facility has already implemented many changes to operate more efficiently. Therefore, potential savings from consolidation could be relatively modest and must be weighed against the likely negative impacts to the local workforce and area's economy. As you may know, nearly 400 employees and managers rely on the facility for employment. Some of these employees would face the prospect of losing their jobs since many cannot relocate or commute more than 50 miles if mail processing operations are transferred to White Plains.

Finally, the Mid Hudson GMF is well situated in close proximity to Interstates 84 and 87 and Stewart International Airport, and USPS should consider how to adapt and more fully use this

facility without shifting operations to White Plains, which is located in a much more congested and expensive region of the state. We hope that you will give full scrutiny to these issues as you conduct the AMP study, and we appreciate you continuing to update us as this study proceeds.

Sincerely,

Kirsten E. Gillibrand
House of Representatives

Maurice D. Hinchey United States Senate

U.S.